



Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation  
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## MERO ORDER REGARDING PREFERENCE LAW DEADLINES (JULY 8, 2020)

On March 10, 2020, the physical offices of the MERO closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, re-opening on a reduced schedule as of July 6, 2020. In response to the service interruptions related to COVID-19, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council vested the MERO Director with limited authority to modify deadlines relating to the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal and Native American Preference Law, 33 M.P.T.L. See, *Temporary Modification to 33 M.P.T.L., Preference Law Time Limitations in Response to COVID-19*, TCR041620-02 of 05 and *30 Day Extension of Temporary Modification to 33 M.P.T.L., Preference Law Time Limitations in Response to COVID-19*, TCR060420-03 of 03.

In accordance with the authority granted by the Tribal Council to the MERO to respond to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, all statutes of limitations, filing deadlines and other time requirements of 33 M.P.T.L., the Tribal and Native American Preference Law, and any implementing regulations, manuals or guidance are hereby modified as follows:

- **Initial Filing of Claims Against Tribal and Non-Tribal Employers.** Time requirements are suspended for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days beginning March 10, 2020 and ending on July 8, 2020 for initial claim filings as set forth in 33 M.P.T.L. ch. 1 §9(a)(i) and §9(b) against the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and Non-Tribal Employers, respectively. Therefore, when calculating the one hundred eighty (180) days within which a claim may be filed with the Office of Native American Preference (ONAP) or the MERO, as applicable, any days within the period March 10, 2020 to July 8, 2020 are not counted.
- **Filing of Claims Against the Tribe Following an ONAP Decision.** For any potential MERO claim relating to a case that was pending before the Office of Native American Preference (ONAP) pursuant to 33 M.P.T.L. ch. 1 §9(a)(i) between March 10, 2020 and July 6, 2020, inclusive, or for which the fifteen (15) day filing deadline with the MERO included March 10, 2020, the time to file the claim with the MERO pursuant to 33 M.P.T.L. ch. 1 §9(a)(ii) is extended to thirty (30) calendar days after the claimant's receipt of the ONAP decision.

- **MERO Processing and Decision-Making.** Any MERO processing or decision-making time requirements or deadlines with respect to cases under 33 M.P.T.L. ch. 1 §9 that were pending before the MERO as of March 10, 2020, are suspended for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days beginning March 10, 2020 and ending on July 8, 2020. In addition, MERO processing or decision-making time requirements or deadlines with respect to cases under 33 M.P.T.L. ch. 1 §9 that were pending before, or filed with, the MERO on or after March 10, 2020, may be extended on a case-by-case basis for up to sixty (60) calendar days if deemed necessary due to circumstances relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Except as provided herein, Preference Law time requirements remain unchanged, including the October 15 deadline for employers to submit to the MERO their annual Employment Data Reports pursuant to 33 M.P.T.L. ch. 1 §5(j).

This MERO Order supersedes any prior MERO directives with respect to the subjects herein.

  
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Ursula L. Haerter  
MERO Director

07-08-20  
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Date